

PRESS RELEASE – 20.2.20

**ENTER WORLDS IMAGINED THROUGH CONTEMPORARY ART, WITH VOICES
FROM AROUND THE GLOBE MEETING STORIES OF THE TEES VALLEY**

MIMA, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art's, 2020 exhibition programme includes four key shows with significant artists based in the Tees Valley and internationally.

Tapestries and film projections, giant sculptures and innovative materials unfold in the galleries across the year, making sensorially-stimulating, exciting spaces filled with the voices of contemporary artists and ideas from across the globe meeting narratives from the Tees Valley. The exhibitions address the extraction and exchange of rare materials, improvisation in art and skateboarding, and the industrial history and ecological legacy of synthetics production in the Tees Valley amongst other themes.

Laura Sillars, MIMA Director commented: "Our exciting exhibition programme for 2020 includes a range of contemporary solo exhibitions and commissions including; painting, sculpture, drawing, jewellery, ceramics, film and installation artworks from innovative artists and makers.

"A central theme around human relationships to the planet builds from ideas sown in 2019 through our year-long focus on ecology continuing through stimulating exhibitions across 2020."

Spring – Otobong Nkanga, *From Where I Stand*

14 March – 28 June 2020 (Press launch 17 March 2020)

Otobong Nkanga prompts us to think about our relations to land and the extraction of the world's natural resources. Her work spans tapestries, drawings, photographs, installations, videos and performances that reflect on the environment and global systems of making and consuming. Nkanga's solo exhibition, *From Where I Stand* explores the politics of land and its relationship to the body and histories of land ownership and exploitation.

This major exhibition features work from 2008 to 2019, including tapestry *The Weight of Scars*, 2015, large scale installation *From Where I Stand*, 2015, and the multi-media installation *Tsumeb Fragments*, 2015.

Nkanga was born in Nigeria in 1974 and lives in Belgium. She has shown work all over the world in renowned international exhibitions. She received a Special Mention at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia and was awarded the 2015 Yanghyun Prize, the 2017 Belgian Art Prize and in 2019 was the recipient of the Ultimas-Flemish Prize for culture.

Curated by Anne Barlow, Director Tate St Ives and organised by Tate St Ives in association with MIMA.

Middlesbrough Collection – 9 May 2020 – 24 April 2021

Launch event: Friday 8 May 2020

MIMA is the North East's most active collecting institution for contemporary art. Its new year-long Middlesbrough Collection display reveals unknown narratives within the collection, with works never seen since they entered the collection shown alongside well-known pieces. This year we continue to work with communities and residents to tell new stories of the collection and share research into overlooked art histories.

The Middlesbrough Collection holds 2,350 works, a changing selection of which is on permanent display. It encompasses art and craft made by British and international artists from the mid-1800s to today. It features an eclectic mix of works, intertwining local and international artists, combining various media, styles, periods, and subjects.

Summer – Sonia Boyce, *In the Castle of My Skin*

15 July – 4 October 2020

In the Castle of My Skin is a solo exhibition by the acclaimed artist Sonia Boyce who has a long association with the Middlesbrough Collection. The exhibition takes shape across a large new sculpture based on the crystalline form of the mineral pyrite, known as Fool's Gold. The giant structure displays artworks by invited artists and selected pieces from the Middlesbrough Collection and is clad in wallpapers made by Boyce since the early 1990s.

In the Castle of My Skin uses the metaphor of skin as a covering, a surface, a barrier, a marker of identity and a connector between internal and external worlds. A new video by Boyce shares footage of skateboarders filmed in Middlesbrough and Birmingham. This piece connects with the artist's long-held interests in improvisation as a way of making new ideas. The skateboarders play in urban environments, using their bodies to understand space and architectural surfaces. The exhibition is organised in partnership with Eastside Projects with new works co-commissioned by Eastside Projects and MIMA, with support from The Henry Moore Foundation and Elephant Trust.

Autumn – Chemical City

21 October 2020 – 8 February 2021

Offering a sensory exhibition that combines innovative and unusual materials with new artworks and historic photographs and objects, Chemical City brings together stories of the production of synthetics in the Tees Valley with pioneering new sustainable products. The landscape of Tees Valley is shaped by, and social histories are intertwined with, the production of chemicals, and the exhibition looks at the ecological, engineering and social legacies of the production of synthetic dyes and materials. Shown alongside historic materials are more sustainable fibres and fabrics made in response to the ecological impact of synthetics, with examples from students at Teesside University and international start-ups.

MIMA has commissioned Tees Valley-based artist Annie O'Donnell to reflect on the legacy of this industry by making a work in relation to her family history, memories

and myths around chemical production in the area. Artist Onya McCausland's new pigments, made from heavy metals, the by-product of industry found in Tees Valley waterways feature. A video installation by Katarina Zdjelar puts questions of female solidarity, the importance of art in the face of political oppression, labour struggles and internationalism to the fore. Leading thinker Esther Leslie, author of 'Synthetic Worlds' co-curates parts of the exhibition while expert in sustainable fashion Lynne Hugill (part of MIMA School of Art and Design, Teesside University) advises on and co-curates a section on innovative design and fashion.

Public Programme

MIMA's Public Programme continues across the year, with social gatherings, special tours and previews, academic presentations and newly-commissioned performances by artists. Working with artists, students, researchers and residents, the events offer a range of public moments of social connectivity and opportunities to learn about important topics.

Community Programme

MIMA's reputation for excellence in community-centred arts programming has won the institution the accolade of leading a Creative People and Places project. Borderlands, due to launch in spring 2020, is organised with a consortium of partners, supported by Tees Valley Combined Authority, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland local authorities and Teesside University, and supported by Arts Council England.

Community Day brings together people of all ages, ethnicities, genders, abilities, classes and nationalities to collectively make, learn, and debate. It serves all from the young to elderly through Mini MIMA, the session for under-fives, Cloth Club textiles workshop, Cultural Conversations language workshop for those learning English, Creative Age, a session for those living with dementia and their care-givers and Community Campus Learning Garden, a space for learning about growing and wellbeing.

MIMA has been working with Creative Society to develop Tees Valley Creative Job Studio, amplifying the voice of young people in and out of employment and education and mapping work opportunities in the creative industries. Hundreds of young people have worked with MIMA through a new programme at Tees Valley Job Centres. In its third year, Celebrating Age is a programme of creative engagement with the over 55s organised in community spaces with housing provider Thirteen, that develops new ways of thinking about ageing, working towards making Middlesbrough a positive place to grow older. Middlesbrough Settlement, a resident-led project that makes creative projects in North Ormesby, is part of Great Place Tees Valley.

ENDS

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Editor's Note:

Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art is part of Teesside University. It plays a key role in the cultural ecology of North East England, particularly the Tees Valley, and is internationally recognised for its mission. Its programme includes Middlesbrough Collection displays, exhibitions, learning activities, commissions, community-focused projects and events. It is funded by Arts Council England and Middlesbrough Council.

